The

COMMONWEAL

A Weekly Review of Literature the Arts and Public Affairs

FOUNDED BY MICHAEL WILLIAMS

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Neutrality Policy Again to the Fore

NOW THAT the steam has been taken out of so many American pressure groups by the Soviet-Nazi pact, observers note increasing isolationism throughout the country. Yet cooperation with Britain and France becomes more and more inevitable. The Treasury Department has arranged for the British to dispose of their American securities to obtain credits for purchases over here. The President is said to be planning to convene Congress to amend the Neutrality Act if war breaks out. Louis Johnson, acting Secretary of War, chafes at the embargo which goes into effect when war breaks out. Most bellicose of all is Rear Admiral Yates Stirling, U. S. N., retired, who told the Veterans of Foreign Wars that the United States should "go into the war from the first." Few observers will deny that supplying munitions or even the raw materials which present laws still permit is a sure way to be drawn into the conflict. Realistically then the embargo question involves the decision whether or not we should participate in another European war.

Making the World Safe?

Perhaps a war arising from a German invasion of Poland would be as undiluted an example as humanly possible of resistance to unprovoked aggression. Not that Poland is any champion of law and order—in view of her recent seizure of part of Czechoslovakia when the chance offered, and her unsolved domestic problems. Whatever we may say comparatively, France and Britain do not qualify as upholders of international justice and order either. But the main point is that another European war would involve such great moral and physical evils for the peoples drawn in, that even in the unlikely event of its establishing peace and security, it would be far worse than the evils it seeks to overcome. This violates the basic Christian principle that regardless of the end no means may be resorted to which in itself is more evil than the injustice to be overcome. So if war should break out and Congress be convened, instead of repealing the embargo it should enact the Ludlow amendment requiring a referendum before American soldiers are sent overseas. The war now threatening provides no solution.

Where Will the Intellectuals Go?

THE Russian-German agreement has created a chaos among the dominant group of American intellectuals just as much as it has among the world's diplomats. It is a serious domestic crisis. Although it may give further proof that our intellectuals do not use their intellects quite as coolly and capably as they were wont to believe, and that the premises to their thinking were less solid than they imagined, still the brain workers who supported the "liberal," popular front notion of mixed Stalinism and social democracy in this country undoubtedly set the fashion. Now that group is going to do a lot of moving, and it is important where they move to. There were few real Bolshevik revolutionaries among them; those really inclined that way may be expected to come closer and closer to the Trotskyist position, a much more hard-shelled and logical revolutionary line than Stalin's, untested by the responsibility of power, still persuasive with a kind of Gnostic purity. A lot of the popular front intellectuals will give up politics more or less completely, which would be an unhealthy but not violently dangerous development if not carried too far. The greatest danger, however, is that they will flock to a new kind of rabid Native Americanism, inducing an exaggerated nationalism. The lines have already been laid in that direction. The fashionable interest and over-estimation of Amer-

Beware Chauvinism

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ican arts and traditions, folklore and regions, and the tendency to see them more autonomous than they are has already injured our criticism. Given a new emotional and political impetus this chauvinism can lead us far astray: lower our art and literature, for instance, and help bring the country into war. One added danger is that President Roosevelt himself seems to incline strongly that way.

E. I. Watkin on Toynbee's History

God in History

IN THE August 12 issue of the London *Tablet*, Mr. E. I. Watkin writes an article about Arnold J. Toynbee's great work, "A Study of History." Its immediate and dramatic interest comes from its coincidence with this terrible crisis. The three volumes of Toynbee's "Study" so far published deal with the general pattern of the breakdown of civilizations: "a time of troubles" with internal strife between societies which are part of the civilization in question concluded by the establishment of a universal state coextensive with the civilization. This produces an "Indian summer," but, weakened by what went before, the civilization suffers renewed internal strife and invasion and is destroyed. During the decline, a "creative minority" changes to a "dominant minority" which imposes upon an "internal proletariat." This proletariat, after vain revolt against the dominant minority, turns to a higher religion embodied in a universal Church. "In the last resort, however, the cause of decline and decay are reduced to idolatry, that is to say, to the idolization of some human society or institution as though it were an absolute and intangible good." Mr. Watkin thinks that Professor Toynbee truly "breaks the fatal circle of civilizations born only to die," showing "it is precisely during the decay of a civilization, and by reaction against it, that God's kingdom is revealed to the member or members of the 'internal proletariat' whose mission it is to found a higher religion." Christ "is the key to the cyclic, yet ultimately progressive, course of history as it is depicted here."

A personal challenge is embodied in the article. "There are . . . many ways in which the soul of man . . . can seek health for itself or the civilization, or both." Archaism and Utopian futurism are rejected. The resignation and detachment of philosophy is a characteristic way for members of the dominant minority, and then there is religious transfiguration. "If this brilliant historical survey proves anything, it proves that the universal state must come, and that the sole question left open is the means of its advent. . . . Will we seek first the Kingdom of God for Whose coming we daily pray, or the kingdom of whichever nation we may chance to belong to? . . . Whichever our answer and the answer of Western civilization, this historical retrospect shows that somehow and in the end even though it be on the farther shore of a sea of blood, the universal Kingdom must come, and beyond it a triumph of the universal Church more complete than any hitherto achieved." The author makes man responsible for the means, bloody or charitable, by which history develops.

Memorable Trivia

The Human Race Again

THE PRESENT crisis reveals, incidentally, a trait by which humanity often greets the serious moments of destiny. Whatever the color of the impending catastrophe, it never succeeds in subduing all to itself—it never produces a monochrome. Dashes of contrasting color are always inserted into the picture. Thus the London which has been realistically preparing for a war-time siege—stacking provisions, removing valuables, digging trenches—also throws out the news item that motorists bent on a bank holiday have pasted in the cars they are driving resortward this typically cheerful and good-humored plea: "Half a mo', Hitler, let's have our holiday first." Equally characteristic, Paris—the scene of heroic calmness and unwavering resolve amid the actual departure of troops—achieves the valiant vanity of a fashion note decreeing that the collar of milady's dog must match her fingernails and lipstick. This, as any even moderately attentive observer will recognize, is the human race. By such memorable trivia does it ease the mortal strain. The severe-minded are apt to dismiss the tendency as merely thoughtless and unworthy. But there is room for argument. May it not be instead an instinctive striving after a healthy balance? And deeper than that, may it not in its very impudence be another way of showing that man, in the noble words of Sir Thomas Browne, "owes no homage unto the sun"?

Fortune Magazine and the Vatican

The Facade Impresses

CONSISTENT with the friendly spirit manifested several years ago in an article on Lourdes is the way *Fortune* takes up the Vatican in its current issue. The article is also characteristically grandiose in make-up and illustrations. It grasps the fact that the Church is basically "identical with the medieval and even the primitive Church; it is centered on the same geographical spot, teaches the same doctrine, holds out the same hope." It also recognizes that the Church is essentially a spiritual kingdom. The article does not succeed in avoiding common distortion about former hostility to natural science in general and Galileo in particular. It seems to overemphasize the books listed on the Index to the neglect of all works of an immoral or anti-Catholic character. Knowledge of conditions in the United States must have led the edi-

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tors to presume that Pius XI condemned anti-semitism so vigorously, not in defense of Catholic doctrine on human rights and Christian charity, but for fear that Catholics would be next. But more important than these errors in detail is the difficulty of the project as a whole—to present the temporal setting of the papacy without considering the spiritual reality at the heart of that setting. Distortion is inevitable. *Fortune* would seem to imply, for instance, that means are unimportant to the Vatican in the aim of "creating good and faithful Catholics." There is always the temptation of spiritual imperialism, but Christianity is not a religion that is spread by the sword but by charity in its fullness. "See how these Christians love another" has always been the secret of converting the peoples of the world.

Four Years of Rural Electrification

THE LATEST issue of the *Agricultural Situation,* published by the Department of Agriculture, calls attention to an important phenomenon. During the past four years the Rural Electrification Administration has more than doubled the number of electrified farms throughout the country. In the main this has been achieved through loans to farmers' cooperatives, loans which are self-liquidating in twenty-five years or less. The REA has brought the construction cost of rural power lines from over $1,500 down to under $900 a mile. Emphasis has been on supplying power usable in farm operations, on making it a source of income rather than an expense. This largely unheralded development means much in human terms. It cuts down the drudgery on the farms and makes possible the utilization of advances in machinery without the social disadvantages of the mass-production farm. It makes for more time for sociability and greater communication with one's neighbors and the outside world. It helps make farming a better way of life.

Better Life on the Farm

Cancer Treatment Progresses

OVER the considerable number of years since medical science began actively to experiment with cancer, humanity has followed these researches with an interest rooted in tragic reality. There is probably not a single family which has not felt in some branch the mysterious and deadly power of this great scourge. It is called a disease of civilization; but among the many things not known about it is whether this designation itself may not be an error; whether the apparently disproportionate incidence of cancer today may not be due as much to exact diagnosis and careful statistics as to the increase of factors making for the disease. In any event its toll is appalling; nor (outside the fields of surgery and radium therapeutics) has there been any steady prospect of reducing it. Recently, however, some extremely hopeful experiments have been conducted whereby a drastic and protracted lowering of the bodily temperature has produced what seems to be an unquestionable check in the growth of the malignant cells. Current news stories deal with two cases, and there have been several others since the treatment was made public a few months ago. One technique of this procedure of "freezing" is naturally a delicate business—indeed, to the ordinary layman it is almost as unfathomable as the disease itself. Yet there are apparently grounds for hoping that it may produce amelioration in given cases, and eventually even cures. Not the least hopeful aspect is the chance that the nature of the treatment itself may finally yield that clue to the cause of the disease which thus far has baffled medicine.

A New Technique Appears

The Henry George Centenary

NO AMERICAN economist has ever had such a fascination as Henry George, who was born a hundred years ago this month and died in 1897. "Progress and Poverty" is unquestionably one of the most widely and constantly read books written by an American, and yet it would be wrong to call it most influential. As Harold S. Buttenheim justly writes in the current *Survey Graphic,* "the single tax philosophy has nowhere in the world been adopted in its entirety, and has had almost no effect on legislative action —national, state or local—in the United States." The very thing that made Henry George so great and persuasive a figure in his own day and which makes him today the prophet of sincere and perennial enthusiasts, prevents the acceptance of his ideas by any majority. The single tax is too simple; the Georgian view of economics is too direct and simple to convince observers who are immersed in the patent complexities of economy. Exploitation is not based exclusively on the ownership of land. We cannot accept George's economics or philosophy as it has been usually propounded, a unitary, complete whole. But Henry George remains a great reformer and his criticism and suggestions ought to be brought into effective programs of reform. The possibility of some state adopting, as Harold Buttenheim hopes will happen, "by gradual stages, not the single tax, but a scientific system of land value taxation for municipal and county revenues which would bring to the people of that state many of the benefits set forth by Henry George," is a possibility not too distant and not without hope. One thing is certain: the memory of Henry George is so strong that there will be agitation to test possibilities such as this until the experiment is intelligently tried.

A Single Tax Is Too Few

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The Deluge

The wave of Catholic immigration in the nineteenth century meets native Americans.*

By **Daniel Sargent**

THIRTY-EIGHT million foreigners came to our shores during the century that followed the death of Bishop Carroll (1815). No such displacement of population has ever taken place in the world. Over six million Germans came to us, over four million Italians, over three million Poles, and over three million Irish, not to mention the other peoples. We are told that one-eleventh of the population of the globe at this hour is made up of deplaced Europeans. Three-fifth of these Europeans are in the United States. We are a country which has had elections, wars, and a most amazing prosperity, but all other countries have had wars; most have had elections, and some have had prosperity. None of these things have made us unique. But we are unique as the receptacle of the greatest deplacement of population in the history of the world.

Our country which received this deplacement was extraordinarily capable of absorbing it. Its territory was vast, habitable, yet generally uninhabited. Its receiving population had an aptitude for trade and a genius for technical invention, which made it easy to establish almost overnight factories which could use the immigrants as employees. And then the country was so undeveloped in its means of communication that it could use countless sturdy arms, and needed to use countless arms, all at once, for building roads over the mountains, for digging canals, for laying railroads. Finally its political system was especially constructed so as to be able to accept men of every race or creed as its citizens. And finally again, the people already in this nation, those who remembered its founding, had every intention of being pleased by the entrance of newcomers.

The flood of immigration, although it came to a land fitted better than others to absorb it, could not be, not at first at least, absorbed; and it remained a flood, like a too great rain, or a fertility-giving torrent which begins by causing destruction. Those who had been in the land before them made every effort to rise above them, and looked on them, in spite of any phrases in the Declaration of Independence, as their inferiors. This had its absurdity. Taken as a whole there were much fewer utterly worthless persons in the Deluge of the 40's and 50's than in the colonial transportations. And it was something of a betrayal of our profession of principles to look down on fellowmen. Yet it was in accord with our old Anglo-Saxon practice of treating the Indians as vermin, and of regarding people who did not do things exactly like us—the Spaniards for instance—as unentitled to fair play. And also it was in accord with one self-evident truth: the older-comers were initiate into the new nation; the others were not.

The truth is the people who greeted the immigrants, or who shrank from them, had that xenophobia which no nation ever has been free from. All peoples have their xenophobia and it twines about their virtues, and I do not remember that any reformer has been able to eradicate it without exterminating a people. In fact xenophobia is the mark of this mortal life of ours, and the greatest difference between our life now, and that which we pray to have in Heaven is that in Heaven we shall be in the bottom of our heart unfeignedly happier for every newcomer at Heaven's feast.

Xenophobia, however, if it cannot be eradicated can be controlled, provided it be called by its right name, and properly treated, but this particular xenophobia, that of the citizens of the United States in the first half of the nineteenth century, refused to call itself a xenophobia—it was too proud. It took on a higher motive, pretended to a religious indignation, an anti-Catholicism. It called this flood of indigence and misery the Catholic Church.

Church drowned in immigration

And one thing is true: the Catholic Church did not try to float above it. It became gladly drowned in it. Such was in accord with its eternal vocation. The Church is much more afraid of a high-brow than an illiterate, of a man in soft garments than of one in rags. Its affinity is perpetually with any misery. And then it happened that this particular misery was largely a Catholic misery. Not all the immigrants were Catholic, but half of them were, and those who were most indigent, most alien among aliens were Catholics. No land was stranger for any immigrant, unless he was financier or Puritan, than Boston. It was a place of one type of man, one type of discipline, one way

* Taken from a chapter of Daniel Sargent's book, "Our Land and Our Lady," to be published September 20 by Longmans, Green and Company, New York. $2.50.

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of being grim and thrifty and successful. It was, not only in a religious sense of the world, the most un-catholic place in the universe. Yet into this unhospitable ground came freakish immigration. One can read about it in Catholic statistics. In 1790 there had been one hundred and twenty Catholics in Boston. In 1820 there were two thousand. Then there commenced a trickle: there were seven thousand in 1828. Then the full Deluge: there were forty thousand in 1850. And all these Catholics were Irish and all were immigrants. No wonder the Church and the immigrants were looked on as one in and about Boston.

And what was true of Boston was true of other places. The influx of Catholics was astounding in other New England cities. In the diocese of Hartford, Connecticut, in 1854 there were twenty thousand Catholics, the very next year there were forty thousand. And there were cities in the Mississippi Valley where a like increase took place: in Cincinnati's diocese in 1843 there were fifty thousand Catholics, three years later were one hundred thousand. In 1845 the entire number of Catholics had been little over one million. During the next ten years a million and a quarter Catholics arrived from Ireland alone, not to mention those from Germany. The Catholics who were not immigrants became a small minority in this great mass, and became undistinguishable from it. The problem of the Church was with the immigrants. And the obsessing work of the clergy was for them. Merely to house them under some kind of a roof where they could hear Mass of Sundays was a task which made other tasks a distraction. And then there were the schools to build, and the hospitals, and the orphanages—all without money.

Even the bishops disappeared in the Deluge, from any national gaze drowned. Archbishop Carroll had been known far and wide. Bishop Cheverus at Boston was a conspicuous figure in Boston to Protestants as well as Catholics: he belonged to the city. But that was before the Deluge. After the Deluge the bishops belonged to the immigrants and were to the Protestants anonymous. Bishop Fenwick who succeded Bishop Cheverus at Boston was himself no immigrant—much less than his predecessor. There were only two bishops who were widely known in the United States in the days of the Deluge, in its first flood. And one of them was known because he stood outside of it; he was Bishop England of Charleston, in which city there arrived no immigration; the other was Archbishop Hughes of New York, and he was known because the flood at New York was so prodigious that it made him known. He was the ruler of that flood. I might, if it did not sound disrespectful, liken him to a kind of Neptune who rode on its waves, who quelled the storms, who was loved by the waves, who was great by them.

There was some logic, therefore, in identifying the Catholic Church at this time and place with immigrants; with people generally poor, and often unlettered, and who did not live according to the customs (good or bad) established in the land to which they came. But really the confusion of the Catholic Church with foreigners had nothing to do with logic at all. During the war of 1812 President Madison had decreed a Day of Fasting and Prayer, because of the disasters our country was enduring in the capture of her capital, and the dangers which she faced. At this time there was no immigration whatsoever, much less a Catholic tide of it, yet many of the Protestant pulpits on that Fast Day thundered against the Catholic Church. There was a great atavistic anti-Catholic emotion pent up in Protestant pulpits which with or without logic looked for an occasion to vent itself.

The flood meets Native Americanism

Thus in the early days of the Deluge there came into being an anti-Catholic movement which gave the motive power and the ardor to the respectably-titled Native American Movement. It resulted in various riots and burnings of Catholic buildings, notably in Boston and Philadelphia. It was, after a manner, a persecution, but, as such, it could not be compared with the great persecutions of history. It had one mania, however, that gives it an unsavory importance. It chose as its chief mania a rage against the cult of the Blessed Virgin and against nuns, who were and are her image. When in 1834 the Native American mob burned a Catholic building in Boston, it was not the Cathedral of the Holy Cross that they chose to burn: it was a nunnery — the Ursuline Convent in Charlestown. Ten years afterwards the rioting broke out in Philadelphia. The first cry of the Native Americans as they stood outside of St. Michael's Church was, "Down with the Irish." But the next cry was, "To the Nunnery, to the Nunnery." They burned down one convent and would have burned down another, had some defenders not fired a warning shot at them. Two churches, one of them St. Michael's, the other St. Augustine's, to which Washington had given $50, were also burned to the ground, and those who were there say that the shout which went up from the crowd when the gold cross of St. Augustine's began to topple into the flames was like the shout of Hell, yet even then more fiendish, more blood-curdling, more particularly sinister, was the poor misguided cry: "To the Nunnery, to the Nunnery."

Some people may ask how this perversity came about. Whence this madness? It is not for me to explain, but those who ask should read some of the writings of these days of the Deluge. Even some respectable Protestant ministers were responsible for the mania. In the 1820's and 30's there was a very conspicuous Presbyterian minis-

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ter who entered into various controversies with Father Hughes of Philadelphia, later to be Bishop Hughes of New York. His name was the Reverend R. J. Breckenridge. Look on page 59 of his book entitled *Papism in the 19th Century,* published in 1826, and see his horror at finding in the Baltimore Cathedral, newly completed, such honor paid to Our Lady. He noticed, as if he were a spy seeing what no one else could see, that the magic letters A.M. were behind the Bishop's chair. So he concluded, "All these altars, this edifice, the ecclesiastics who officiate here, all in short, it thus appears, are devoted to the worship and care of a pious Jewish female, who about eighteen centuries ago, after fulfilling her singular and glorious destiny in this world, returned again, as to her mortal part, to the earth as it was, and as to her soul, to God who gave it."

The Reverend Breckenridge was the most respectable of the shouters out against Mariolatry and nuns, and it cannot but be perceived that in his rage he almost melts into reverence when he really finds himself obliged to define what she was. We can have a soft spot for some of his words: they were true. He at least perceived that Baltimore was dedicated to Our Lady.

But he was much more respectable than the others. He may have roused some rioters, but those who cried out, "To the Nunnery," had been roused by writing stronger than his: by the pornographic literature which pretended to be revelations of what went on in convents. The most famous of these books was *The Revelations of Maria Monk,* her *Awful Disclosures.*

The "awful disclosures"

It is not to bicker over an incident much better forgotten that I revive mention of such a book. It is not to stain the name of Maria Monk's backers, some of whom were merely miseducated men who were honorable enough at last to acknowledge their error—after the harm was done. Nor is it to revive the unfortunate chapter in the history of a New York publishing house, which in name still exists, and which published the book, knowing it to be a fraud, under the assumed name of Howe & Bates. The incident is one which explains a whole fifty years of our country's history, and takes us to the reading book of a million families in the 1830's when a million families was a considerable proportion of all the families in our land. Eighty thousand copies of the book were sold within a year, and three hundred thousand and more in a decade. The *Awful Disclosures* made American history as Harriet Beecher Stowe's *Uncle Tom's Cabin* did.

The anti-Catholic riots of the 1830's were a disgrace, yet they served two good purposes. They disclosed first that this talk about Native Americanism being the exclusive property of the Protestants was nonsense. During the riots the record of the Catholics was utterly admirable; they were behaving like Americans. In Philadelphia it was not the Catholics but the anti-Catholics who knocked the mayor of the town senseless. It was with a recognizably American voice that Bishop Kenwick after two days of rioting had addressed a letter to his flock:

> To the Catholics of the City and County of Philadelphia:
>
> Beloved children: In the critical circumstances in which you are placed, I feel it my duty to suspend the exercises of public worship in the Catholic churches which still remain, until it can be resumed with safety, and we can enjoy our constitutional right to worship God according to the dictates of our conscience. I earnestly conjure you to practice unalterable patience under the trials to which it has pleased Divine Providence to subject you; and remember that affliction will serve to purify us, and render us acceptable to God, through Jesus Christ, who patiently suffered the cross.
>
> ✠ Francis Patrick,
> *Bishop of Philadelphia.*
>
> May 10, 1844.

As for the leaders of the Native Americans in the riotings, they were not even by birth Americans. Some of them were Italian atheists. The great leader in Philadelphia was an Irish ex-priest Hogan. The leader almost everywhere was known by no name: he called himself the Angel Gabriel. He rode on a white horse attired in flowing white garments. He carried no birth certificate with him, yet I doubt if he was born in Heaven, and I hope he was not born anywhere in the United States. His name was later learned to be Mr. Orr.

The other good turn that the rioting did and the general persecution that attended it, was that it identified the Catholics with a loyalty to the Blessed Virgin. It defined them as "Mariolaters," as defenders of nuns, as believers in the Incarnation, and in the mystery of a supernatural vocation. It conferred an honor on them. It separated the Church in our land from any danger it may have had of thinking that the Christian faith was but a way of thought, a plausible opinion, a philosophy which many wise men had held. No, it was something to make us children. We began by being the shepherds who were the first to visit the new-born Christ, even before the wise men. We were not Catholics for any reason merely civic: we were Catholics in order to be able to have the privilege to say the rosary, and to kneel before the statue of Our Lady, and to kiss with our lips —which were a thing such as any immigrant amongst us possessed—the straw of the crib on Christmas day. We had a Church not founded, not buttressed even, by any pride in our own talents.

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Telephone at Midnight

"Any driver in that exact spot at 11:06 P.M. would have been struck."

By **Albert J. Mason**

JOE'S first halting words snatched away the last clinging vestments of sleep. "We . . . we had a little . . . accident. You'd better come right away . . . Memorial Hospital."

Joe and another boy, Ray, had been out driving with our son. My thoughts spun in a whirlpool of panic, leaving speech rudderless. "What did you . . . is anybody . . . (*My God! Jim!*) Jim—is he hurt?"

Silence.

"They . . . sent an ambulance for him." Joe's voice seemed to fade, then swell painfully. "You'd better come at once."

"Yes, yes, right away." I found myself drawing trousers over my pajamas. A dressing gown, grey head above it, appeared. Father, who was living with us, demanded, "What is it?"

"Jim's hurt, auto wreck. I'm going to the hospital." Shoe-strings became ropes in my hands.

"I'll go with you," Father announced, and even as I protested (he is nearing 80), he was throwing on clothing. In a few seconds I was flinging back the garage door. Father climbed in the seat beside me.

"Fast, but not too fast," warned an inner voice. "Keep your grip. Jim needs you." All I said to Father was, "God! I've been afraid of this." He answered not a word.

My wife was 500 miles away. No chance to send for her; I must handle this alone. Even as I dodged traffic and beat a signal by split seconds, my thoughts raced . . . my son's roadster hurtling end over end . . . laughter-loving boys crushed, cut, bleeding. And Jim! "They sent an ambulance for him." My heart thumped madly. "Steady. Keep your mind on driving. Don't take unnecessary chances."

We jerked to a stop at the entrance, where a neon sign said much in one word, "Emergency." Inside we met Joe, his head a mountain of bandages, face a pasty grey, shirt torn and crimsoned.

"Joe, are you all right? Where's Jim?"

"He's not here. They . . ."

"Not here!" I looked wildly up and down the dim-lit hall. Faintness advanced, retreated. Several internes and nurses were about. I had a fogged impression of compassionate faces above white garments. Frantic relatives must be routine here, yet they projected silent understanding. It *is* real—this gentle condolence of those who serve suffering and sorrow.

From a ward appeared Ray—an apparition! Half his face was buried under taped gauze. Several teeth were gone, his lips lacerated. He mumbled something. He, too, was on his feet. But my boy? Ray just leaned against the wall, his pallor matching its whiteness. Joe's eyes mirrored stark fear. Time's pendulum hung motionless. Yet it must have been but a few moments before a firm hand touched my arm, and I turned to face a traffic officer, low-voiced, kind, maddeningly deliberate. "Are you the father of the other boy?"

"Yes. Where is he. They said . . ."

"Take it easy, sir. He was taken to General Hospital. You know the way?"

"Yes, no, that is . . . I've a general idea. Tell me and I'll drive . . ."

"Wait a minute. We'll lead you." Another officer joined him. I started for the door with Father close behind. "Hurry, will you? Hurry!"

As the patrol car shot out the gate, I was close on its tail light. The siren screamed, higher, higher, clearing a path. My speedometer hovered above 70. A mile, two miles, three. Father just sat there loosely, his mute presence lending strength. Unexpectedly, the police car swerved in a turn. I followed . . . on two wheels, in loose gravel. "Close!" . . . A narrow street, grades, curves, a long driveway.

In the elevator, one of the officers said, "Brace yourself, Buddy. He's pretty bad." Will power found somewhere a last small reserve to draw upon. Father's hand gripped my shoulder. (He said afterward that his knees "sort of gave way.") The elevator stopped. "Wait here a minute," and our guide disappeared up the hall. We obeyed numbly. I believe my least confused thought was, "Keep your grip."

How long, how long? At last the officer came back—smiling! "The boy's going to be all right. He's conscious. The doctor says come in."

As soon as I glimpsed that Irish smile, even before Sergeant O'Hara said a word (I later learned his name so as to commend him to his chief), I knew! We hurried into a hall that smelled of ether. "This way."

The doctor, too, was smiling—conveying a message more reassuring than words. Jim, looking

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much better than I had expected, was stripped to the waist, stretched out on the white table.

"Hello, Dad. We had a wreck, I guess." His hand groped for mine, gripped it firmly. "Why, hello Grand-dad. You too?"

"How do you feel, Jim?" Father asked.

The patient managed a smile. "Fine. I'm all right."

"Sure you are," I grinned through a mist. "We'll have you out of here in no time!" Jim closed his eyes and lay motionless. I felt that I should say something more. "Now don't worry about anything, son. Take it easy—"

The doctor lifted a loose dressing to reveal a long, deep gash in Jim's forehead. He pointed to several spots where the hair had been cut around vicious scalp wounds. Stepping back, he beckoned me aside. "Perhaps you would like to move him to a private hospital?"

"Is . . . is it all right to move him?"

"In an ambulance, yes. That left elbow is pretty bad. Deep cut, probable fracture. Whatever gashed his forehead just missed the eye by a fraction of an inch. We thought at first his skull was fractured, but I am almost positive it is only a concussion. Lucky, that's all."

* * *

For you, who are just as proud of your boy, or girl, and who, like Jim's mother and me, cannot sleep until you hear the gay "Good nights" and the welcome click of the latch-key, here is the crux of this experience that holds one key to our real American Tragedy.

Jim had not a chance that night! *Any driver in that exact spot* at 11:06 P.M. would have been struck. Fate picked him and his schoolmates as the victims. Jim's car was "wrecked by a wreck"—a decrepit car which should not have been granted license plates, driven by a drink-befuddled moron who should never have had a driver's license. There were four in the front seat, in itself a misdemeanor in our State. After "partying" at roadside taverns, they had hurtled into the highway with no lights showing on their car.

Oddly enough, I hold no bitterness; only gratitude that my son and his friends, by some miracle, are alive and well today. Others I have known have been less fortunate. There have been eleven automobile casualties in the families of my friends and neighbors, including two deaths, all within recent years. At least eight of these accidents, to my positive knowledge, were caused by witless or drunken fools.

Not all accidents, of course, are similar in circumstances, *but thousands of them are,* and these are certainly the most readily preventable. If we would only insist upon a more rigorous inspection of cars, and more searching requirements for drivers' licenses, including the instant conviction of every motorist guilty of drunken driving, we might save at least some of the "one in three children who will be killed or injured during their normal lifetime."

Take it from one parent who knows: No effort is too great if it will spare some of the terror of that dread midnight call.

Lines to an Aviator

What can you know of flight
Who do not know
The way the soul may go,
Outward through night,
Onward through light,
So high, green fields are gray
And the bright blue of day
Liquid, no-color, thin.
Over the stratosphere
No less than here
The way the soul goes, fleeter
than your ships,
Deafened by distant din
Of the Apocalypse,
Fuelled by the fire
Kindled of God's desire.

Fragile your wayward wings,
The silver flange that swings
Your bird that knows no nest
Poleward, or east or west.

Envy can never fill
The fleet soul's pilot-will
Watching your low-ceiled passage
down the sky.

Yet of affection, I,
Knowing your bliss,
Concede you this:
Lovely analogy
Of what man's flight may be.

SISTER MARY IRMA, B.V.M.

But Let Us Honor Here

Attentive here we think of unmourned others,
Dead heroes sleeping and dead heroes walking;
Think of a battle's bloodshed and a brother's
Voice that was hushed when musical with talking;
Think of the heroes harvested with guns,
The husky and the hearty and the brave;
And those mothers who gave heroically their sons,
Those mothers whose grief immortally lights this grave.

But let us honor here those million others;
Those cowards who were born of fear and pity,
Those heroes also sons of mortal mothers:

Unsung, un-named by home town or home city,
Here they are buried. And here side by side
Lie still like heroes and, like heroes, died.

ALBERT CLEMENTS.

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Museum: Guide or Encyclopedia?

The impressive inauguration of the new Museum of Modern Art inspires comment.

By **Jerome Mellquist**

WHEN a tourist goes to a strange country he likes to have a road map, and when the uninitiated seek their way about the frequently uncharted areas of Modern Art, they, too, wish that there were some kind of handy guide which would aid them. It is the function of a real museum of modern art to provide a guidance of that sort. It must identify not merely each picture along the road, so to speak, nor pause only at those group habitations we call schools, but, in a larger sense, establish a certitude in the mind of the spectator that he is on the right track, and that it is one worth travelling.

Now, until ten years ago, no museum with such purposes had been established in this country. Indeed, the Metropolitan was still in the horse-and-buggy stage. It had not even laid out the road through the 19th century: Cézanne, Degas, Renoir, Daumier, even the earlier Courbet, and the Impressionists as a whole were missing from its collection. Not until the notable bequest of Mrs. Havemeyer, exactly a decade ago, were these names recognized and presented with anything like justice. But there the Museum stopped. The road might open ahead, but so far as the Metropolitan was concerned art ceased before 1900, and if the traveller wanted to advance any farther he did so at his own risk.

In the fall of 1929, Mr. Alfred Barr, then only 26, persuaded a number of collectors, notably A. Conger Goodyear, to support the idea of founding a modern museum which would really demonstrate what had been done by the Post-Impressionists and since. He started off well. His first show —Cézanne, Seurat, Van Gogh, Gauguin—despite the cramped quarters in the upper floors of the Heckscher Building, was a sensation, and by its success proved that the country had thirsted for something of the sort. Moreover, the pictures were well-chosen and modestly displayed, and there was a general air of aliveness and authority which was thoroughly attractive. It seemed that at last we were to have what we had been looking for.

The next exhibition was less impressive. It furnished one compromise after another. Devoted to 19 Living Americans, it seemed to be a compendium of what everybody wanted and nobody desired. It was uncertain, unconvincing, dubious. The institution's subsequent history has been an alternation between these two levels of accomplishment. It has at times—as in its Ryder-Homer-Eakins, its Modern Architecture, its Aztec and splendid Negro Art, its Van Gogh, Richardson and Marin exhibitions—shown that it knew how to duplicate its initial successes. Then at other times it cancelled out these efforts with its tasteless and insignificant Germans, its arty photographic murals, its fur-lined cups and other tricky knick-knacks of the catch-all Surrealism show, and its by no means esthetic celebration of the camera's history. On these unhappy occasions it functioned as a three-ring circus, a scientific laboratory or a kind of historical warehouse, but certainly not as a repository of taste and selectivity from which the public might draw for further refinement and understanding.

Now the Museum is in a new building. It has been dedicated by the President. It has been extensively noticed in the press. The March of Time has pictured and publicized it. Everyone knows about the new Museum of Modern Art. But how is it performing its function? How is it guiding or quickening taste? The answer is to be found in the character of the exhibition now visible within its walls, and in the utilization of space, materials and ideas in connection with the building which houses it.

Roughly speaking, three main divisions of paintings are to be observed in this show. The first of these is the Post-Impressionist, which we might call the art of father's time, because it was chiefly in the late 19th and early 20th centuries that it occurred, and because in the case of Cézanne it reflects a stability, and in that of Renoir a wholehearted acceptance of life, which are not in the mood of today. It is particularly in this period that the Museum excels.

Its Renoir room, for example, is like a bouquet of roses, a bath of light, a summer picnic all at once. Here we dance with the happy couples at the "Moulin de la Galette," respond to the health of winsome bathers, and are touched by the springtime freshness of a young girl in a portrait. In the *Luncheon of the Boating Party,* we participate in that outdoor sunniness and great splendid animal confidence which were so preciously Renoir's. This treasureable room is enhanced by the brace

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of Seurats which face the Renoirs from the opposite wall. Spare, cerebral, searching, they provide a severe and delicate counterpoint to Renoir's great wholesomeness.

The alcove which follows is equally worthy of a long stay by the visitor. It is devoted to numerous canvases by the "pilgrim of the way," Cézanne. Here his whole struggle unfolds itself—from the first tortured portraits through the paste-laden works which followed, into the smoother period of *The Black Clock,* and then on into the calm and expansive landscapes where his soul seemed to be one with the Infinite, even as in his ancestors, the Gothic artists of the cathedrals.

The succeeding alcoves are rewarding, too. Particularly the one in which Van Gogh is displayed. While not typical of all his aspects, nor best exemplifying all of those its presents, enough at any rate is furnished to recharge our appreciation of this agonized and sun-smitten genius. The Gauguins, hung side by side with him, seem less impressive. Other alcoves show the crippled Toulouse-Lautrec at his best as a painter, and one uncanny work by the naive, but knowing, Henri Rousseau. In short, that art which typified the generation now past is, on the whole, most justly and sympathetically presented by the Museum.

It is when we reach today that the questions begin. On the third floor, for example, the first alcove starts off impressively with three forceful canvases of Rouault, a handsome if perhaps over-decorative pair of Matisses, and a solid Bonnard. The rooms of Picasso are also so arranged as to make the spectator feel that here was a stop worth making (even though the later works may puzzle him). The room on the Abstract is adequate, and some of the lesser men are sufficiently represented. But an uncertainty prevails. An entire large room is given over to the Surrealists. Here the visitor will wonder if he has struck a detour. And he will be right. For these calculations and daubings—with the possible exception of Miro, the fantastic Chagall and the precise, but elliptical, Klee—have no significance as works of art. They serve only to illustrate the pathology of contemporary Europe. Likewise the so-called Neo-Romantics and the tricksters who bound about in the room devoted to them. Here the Museum shows itself in need of a guide.

Its success with the Americans is somewhere between the two categories already mentioned. Among the older men—Ryder, Homer, Eakins, Whistler—it moves with authority and conviction. But when it comes to the present century it cannot even see the difference between Luks and his associates of "The Eight," nor include those of our experimenters, such as Walkowitz, Kopman and Blümner, whose work has indisputable esthetic significance. Worse, it devotes a whole room to the so-called "social art" of America today. With the possible exceptions of Marsh and Gropper, this room is a total loss.

Perhaps the Museum will say that it sought to be representative. That is no answer. A museum's function is to select. Encyclopœdias belong in learning, not in art. The real point is that, even as with the Metropolitan, the Museum of Modern Art is more sure as it treads in the past. In the present it lacks courage, taste and clarity.

The same is evident in the garden. All the physical means are at hand, but the disposition of them is unprepossessing. But let our emphasis not be negative. The plant itself is magnificent. The rose-petal alcoves, each opening into the other, day-lit for the most part—the vines along the stairway—the very idea of the garden out in back—the inherent faith in Modern Art which is implied by the erection of this establishment for it—this and the attempt, in part successful, to guide the public to a better appreciation of it, show that the Museum is capable of its own best and of making itself, as it promises to be, a real light in the world. It needs only to strengthen that light by eliminating present obscurities.

The Island

Once, on a tropic voyage, he had passed
A little island with its soft green slopes
Spread out like sunning wings, and from a height
Against the sun a waterfall let down
Its jewelled hair and one white shoulder gleamed
At times through billowed light.

A drowsy town,
In warm pastels, with back to rounded curves
Of cliff, with one white ribbon of a road
Curled to the crest above it, watched the bay.
A few white sails were standing almost still—
As if they did not care to go away.

He felt he knew how it would be at night
If he could stand upon the highest hill,
While stars were close around, and hear below
The deep slow breathing of the sea.

Since then
He keeps the island as a place to go
From vain and troubled things, for loveliness
But glimpsed yet known, for magic sensed but lost
Along the wind's caress.

And seeing her,
He only knew he felt the same as when
He saw the island, knew the same quick stir
Of pulse, the light upon his eyes, the sense
Of sunning, many-colored wings. . . . And then
He was determined she must not be lost—
The sea of faces made no difference,
The sound of voices faded into sound
Of great, slow waters moving to the land
Where breakers curled against the warm white sand.

GLENN WARD DRESBACH.

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Views & Reviews

BY MICHAEL WILLIAMS

IF THE dreaded second world war begins, as seems probable as these words are written, the question of Soviet Russia's motives in throwing over the negotiations with England and France and signing up almost as an ally with Nazi Germany will at once become of only academic interest to the Europeans. The grim realities of the new situation will direct all energies in the democratic nations toward the task of dealing with the results of Stalin's action rather than with the analysis of its causes. The question will remain one of the most interesting and most apparently complicated puzzles presented in all the long history of double-dealing and chicanery in diplomacy, so rich in similar, if not so startling, events. It will provoke a whole library, a separate literature, in future years. But for some time to come, should the war break out—and as I write the zero hour of the great decision is at hand at the British ambassador flies over the North Sea toward Berlin—the suppression of Communism, so far as all outward manifestations of its activities are concerned, will undoubtedly be rigidly applied in Great Britain and France, and public discussion of Stalin's behavior will wither away. The French and the British, and the Poles, and their probable or possible allies, and Germany and Italy, and their allies, and the neutral nations as well—if, indeed, any neutrals whatsoever will be tolerated by the combatants—all alike will be ruled by the ideal governments favored by the totalitarian system: by absolute, military dictatorships, under which there will be no place at all for the give-and-take of free, democratic discussions of the questions of Communism.

Aloof from the suicidal affair in Europe, the Soviet will watch, or fight, Japan, or, quite possibly, come to an understanding with the second of its supposedly implacable enemies, on the basis of taking over for their own benefit the riches which the European nations have heretofore been drawing from Asia. When Europe is exhausted and broken, the Soviet may well return toward the West, for its own purposes. Meanwhile, however, it will not be bothered much in France and England by the embarrassment of its agents in those countries, or the discomforts of its liberal and radical friends and former sympathizers. They will either be safely back in Russia, out of the war zone, or in jail or concentration camps, or else up at the front with other conscripted fighters, or tied down to their war-time tasks behind the fighting line, dodging bombs with the rest of the population, no doubt, when the raiders come over the various frontiers.

With us in America, not only in the United States, but in Canada, Mexico, and throughout Central and Southern America, the situation is far different. In Canada, perhaps, conditions may soon approximate those of Europe, save for actual fighting at home, as censorship and other military requirements are applied, as undoubtedly they will be if the war begins in Europe. But for a considerable time, at any rate, this country is not likely to be drawn into the struggle directly. Free speech and discussion will no doubt go on as usual, until or unless—which may God forbid!—we too enter the war; and with us the question of why Stalin made his treaty with Hitler, at the time and under the circumstances, and the further question of what the results of his action are likely to be, both at home and abroad, will remain as one of the most vital subjects that we as a people must strive to understand and deal with.

Four hundred American men and women, all of them influential, more or less, as writers and teachers, artists, journalists, radio speakers, and so forth, only a few days ago signed a joint letter, widely publicized, ardently defending the claims of the Soviet to be considered a democratic system, and, particularly, "to make it clear that Soviet and fascist policies are diametrically opposed." To be sure, they wrote and published their amazing document just before the great bomb-shell of the Soviet-Nazi pact exploded; but, no doubt, now that Earl Browder and other authoritative exponents of the Soviet "line" of policy, whatever it may be at the moment, have stoutly defended the pact, a large number of the four hundred American sympathizers with, if not outright members of, the American branch of the Communist party, will gladly accept and apply the casuistry of Moscow's theology. They will claim that Stalin has been quite consistent; that he has in fact achieved a great victory for democracy over Hitler and the Fascist-Nazi axis; and will continue, as long as they can, to promote Communism in the United States as the best ideal of democracy. In short, their faith will rise triumphant to other considerations.

But many among the four hundred have no such faith; and they are sadly bewildered. As the *Nation* says in its editorial on the Stalin-Hitler pact, "Soviet Russia had assumed leadership of the anti-Fascist front the world over; it provided the one great hope that Germany might be rescued from the clutches of Hitler, and the rest of Europe avoid the fate of the Austrians and the Czechs. And now it has timed this rapprochement with Nazism for the moment when Hitler will derive the greatest possible benefit from it. The disillusion which will follow among the left forces here and abroad will be bitter."

Those of us who never believed that the Soviet was the one great hope of democracy, and long ago saw that many of the determining ideas of both the Soviet and the Nazi systems derived their strength from the same source—from militant atheism, convinced and logical materialism—should not be so uncharitable as to crow over the disillusion and discomfiture of the many left-wing supporters whose mistaken but honest idealism and desire for social justice led them to follow, or to be influenced by, the Soviet system, and its devious policies. There remains the much more necessary and consistent task of bringing forth for such disillusioned souls to study the practical ways and means by which the true philosophy of democracy and liberty and social justice, based upon actual, concrete Christianity, may be recognized as the truth which they vainly sought in Communism. Maybe it will not be until a distant future that such studies and such efforts may be carried on, if the dreaded world war comes; but in any case, that is our work, now and later.

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Communications

IS YOUR RELIGION SHRINKING

New York, N. Y.

TO the Editors: The controversy between Mr. Copley ("Is Your Religion Shrinking?") and Mr. James ("Proletarian Catholicism," etc.) was vitally interesting. It seems to me that Mr. Copley's *real* argument is against the whole social action program of the Church. His basic difficulty is contained in his question: "Would it not have to be represented that when Christ commissioned the Church to teach the nations He had in mind, not only faith and morals, but temporal matters as well [viz. "fair prices," "proper week's work," etc.] and that the infallibility of the Church extends to them?"

There are thousands of Catholics who could answer that question. At best, they would be second-hand replies. They would probably be adapted from the social encyclicals of the Pontiffs. So if Mr. Copley is seeking the best and most complete reply, let him study with care, intelligence, and honesty: "Rerum Novarum," "Quadragesimo Anno," and "Divini Redemptoris."

However, there is one particular argument which should be met in the pages of THE COMMONWEAL. Mr. Copley says: "Certainly it may be recalled that when the Master of Christians told men that all such things as meat and drink and raiment, would be added unto them if they first sought the kingdom of Heaven. He addressed the anxious particularly and saw they were anxious because they had little faith."

Long ago one of Christianity's greatest thinkers, St. Thomas Aquinas, wrote down the answer as follows: "Our Lord forbade not *necessary* but *inordinate* solicitude. Now there is a fourfold solicitude to be avoided in temporal matters. First, we must not place our end in them, nor serve God for the sake of the necessities of food and raiment. Wherefore He says: *Lay not up for yourselves treasures on earth* (Matth. vi).—Secondly, we must not be so anxious about temporal things as to despair of God's help: Wherefore Our Lord says: *Your Father knoweth that you have need of all these things* (ibid.)—Thirdly, we must not add presumption to our solicitude; in other words, we must not be confident of getting the necessaries of life by our own efforts, without God's help. Such solicitude our Lord sets aside by saying that a man cannot add anything to his stature.—Fourthly, we must not anticipate the time of anxiety; namely, by being solicitous now, for the needs, not of the present but of a future time: wherefore, He says: *Be not solicitous for tomorrow.* (ibid.) [Summa Theol. I, II, 2. 108 Art. 3 ad. 5]."

Now one can undertand a pauper or a Saint who would paraphrase Christ's words as imprudently as Mr. Copley. But Mr. Copley, I suppose, is neither. And I am convinced that most of those who wield such shaky arguments are free from anxiety not because of great faith but because it would be absurd to worry about "meat and drink and raiment" when financial resources ensure them in plenteous quantities and indefinitely. Besides Mr. Copley should always remember that the Church has its authorized interpreters of Scripture. Only the Protestant sects allow men to quote and interpret Scripture to their fancy.

SALVATORE ADAMO.

"THE" UKRAINE

Brooklyn, N. Y.

TO the Editors: It was an excellent idea to print at this time not only some information on Ukraine, but also the Polish attitude and reaction to the present phase of the age-old Ukrianian struggle for freedom.

The article by Theodosia Boresky, brief as it is, is exceptionally well prepared. It supplies the basic information the intelligent American readers have long been denied, and it arouses interest and a desire to learn more about the vast land of the great plains or steppes and its frontier people, the Kozaks.

It is interesting to compare this article with the misleading account in the January 22 issue of *Time*. Miss Boresky's "The Forgotten Nation" was written by a person well acquainted with Ukrainian history, the second is most likely the erroneous product of armchair encyclopedia research. (There is no true account of Ukraine or its history in English textbooks or encyclopedias!)

May I point out a very glaring typographical error. Despite the fact that the author has defintely stated that the name of the country is Ukraine, that it is not a borderland but a nation of about a million square kilometers, there are two instances where the definite article, "the" is coupled with "Ukraine." It is just as erroneous to use this notation as it is to write "the England," "the Germany" or "the Greece."

COMMONWEAL is to be congratulated for presenting this factual article to interested American readers.

STANLEY SIBELIUS.

FINNEGAN'S WAKE"

New York, N. Y.

TO the Editors: I am very glad to have Father Owen B. McGuire's comment on my review of James Joyce's book, "Finnegan's Wake." As he seems to have misunderstood my statements and attitude I will hope to clarify these in this letter.

As I said in my review, and as Father McGuire correctly quotes me, "the appearance of this book on living-room tables will be no indication that its owners have read it." What was meant, in this case, will probably be clarified by reading the following typical sentence from the book. It appears at the opening of a chapter, on page 75. "As the lion in our teargarten remembers the menuphars of his Nile (shall Ariuz forget Arioun or Boghas the barigans of the Marmazelles from Marmenierre?) it may be, tots wearsense full a naggin in twenty, have sigilposted what in our brievengbust, the besieged bedreant him stil and solely of those liliths undeveiled which had undone him, gone for age, and knew not the watchful treachers at his wake, and theirs to stay."

I have given this quotation as I believe it will show why the book will not be read. As all of it is as obscure as this I cannot say of my own knowledge that the book is, as Father McGuire fears it may be, "indecent, obscene,

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lecherous, and blasphemous." It is true that "Finnegan's Wake" has, scattered through it, numerous strong words such as are at present classified as impolite. In this respect it is almost, but not quite, as indecent as a dictionary, which has the advantage on "Finnegan's Wake" in this respect: The dictionary defines and therefore elaborates on the naughty words; Joyce uses them but in no known or understandable relationship.

The book will not appear on many living room tables, but if it should it will be safe to have it there. It is just as intelligible as if it were written in an unknown language and I believe I sufficiently indicated this fact in my review. As for Mr. Richard Aldington, it may be said that his attitude toward Joyce's book, as Father McGuire quotes him, and mine differ in one vital respect. He denounced it whereas I sought to explain this artistic hybrid in the light of the artistic maladjustment of this and the preceding century. Perhaps this warrants the charge of a "new idolatry of art for art's sake," but I think not.

BARRY BYRNE.

HOME OF TOLERANCE

New York, N. Y.

TO the Editors: A public ward in a municipal hospital is a laboratory where an observer can see a demonstration of tolerance and equality not to be rivaled under any other circumstances. . . .

We quickly find that beneath the dark skin of our negro ward-neighbor, there is a heart that responds with interest in a reciprocity of kindness. We find that the Jew in the bed on the other side generously shares with us the tidbits of his various festivals—last Passover I ate two boxes of David's matzoth.

Last Christmas, Bob, our Jewish pantryman, gave a beautiful demonstration of the spirit of the season, when he ingeniously constructed a small crib and filled it with straw and then somewhere procured a replica of the Divine Infant to lay therein. Not satisfied with his handiwork he went outside and purchased a small framed picture of Mary and Joseph to overlook the crib. Bob's reward seemed immediate and anyone could see by looking at his beaming face. . . .

On Saint Patrick's day of course the whole world is Irish, but here in the hospital, where this is written, where the beds are filled with the sick of the most heterogeneous metropolis in the world, this fact is particularly so. Italian and Russian have no racial abhorrence of green, neither has the German, nor the Pole, nor the Czech, nor the Scandinavian.

What a contrasting thing to consider: the hatred and the vengeance which seem to dominate in the races which makes gods of virility and pugnacity. Contemplating the rapacious scene from this point of involuntary repose, lamenting the reverberations which tentacle-like overlap national boundaries and spew poison into the hearts and minds of unwary mankind, we are prone to thank God daily for giving us the opportunity of knowing better our fellow man, even though the circumstances which compel the acquaintanceship are not of our own devising.

JOHN GRIFFIN.

Points & Lines

The Red-Brown Somersault

THERE is as much chance of an agreement between Nazi Germany and the Soviet Union as there is of his being elected president of the American Chamber of Commerce, said Earl Browder, head of the Communist Party, U. S. A., at Charlottesville, Virginia, July 5, in answer to a question concerning the truth of rumors to the effect that Germany and Russia were cooking up a commercial agreement. *New Masses,* official organ of the Communist Party, itself considered the very suggestion of better economic relations between the Red and the Brown as a dirty canard. The *New Masses* in its December 13, 1938, issue declared:

> Ludwig Lore, foreign affairs commentator of the New York *Post,* finds himself unable to resist the temptation to snipe at the Soviet Union. As a renegade Communist, Mr. Lore undoubtedly considers it his moral duty to besmirch the USSR from time to time. In the November 29 issue of the *Post* he regaled his readers with a report published in that notoriously reliable journal of opinion, the Chicago *Tribune,* that trade between the Soviet Union and Germany is booming despite all the nasty words being passed between them.

So important did it think economic relations that it constantly urged not only the economic boycott of Germany but also the complete severance of trade relations. Its editorial of December 1, 1938, urged:

> The boycott of Nazi-made goods is gaining in scope, with such large additions of strength as the declaration of the retail merchants of the entire state of Montana that they will no longer deal in the products of Hitler Germany. Far transcending the boycott in the importance of the blow it would give to world fascism is the proposal now being urged more strongly than ever, for a complete break in trade relations with the Nazis—an embargo. No terrific dislocation of our economy would be entailed, and the setback to Nazi aggression would have enormous significance.

The *New Masses,* August 1, 1939, said of the Hudson Anglo-German economic proposal:

> The Hudson affair complements developments in the Far East with classic irony. There can be no doubt now that the British government made overtures to the Nazis, offering a $5,000,000,000 loan in return for the kind of pledge with which the fascists have littered the history of our decade. This could only be a war loan: to bolster the Nazi economy, not merely for aggression in Danzig and Poland, but for the drive toward Rumania and the Ukraine. The Polish people, of course, must be properly incensed. But the dangerous thing, as the *Week* reveals, is that Polish Foreign Minister Beck and his clique will use popular indignation as a foil for continued secret negotiations with Berlin. That is the path toward the disaster which shattered Czechoslovakia.

Yet on August 20th Stalin did the very thing that all along has called forth the scorn and bitter criticism of the Stalinist *New Masses* and *Daily Worker,* both official organs of the Communist Party in America. As reported in *Time:*

> Late Sunday night—not the usual time for such announcements—the Soviet Government revealed a pact, not with

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Great Britain, not with France, but with Germany. Germany would give the Soviet Union seven year 5 percent credits amounting to 200,000,000 marks ($80,000,000) for German machinery and armaments; would buy from the Soviet Union 180,000,000 marks' worth ($72,000,000) of wheat, timber, iron ore, petroleum in the next two years. And at Monday midnight the official German news agency announced from Berlin:

"The Government of the Reich and the Soviet Government have decided to conclude a non-aggression pact with each other. The Reichminister of Foreign Affairs, von Ribbentrop, will arrive in Moscow Wednesday to conclude the negotiations."

The *New Masses* blandly asked the world to believe that:

The dramatic thing about the Soviet decision to begin negotiations for a pact with Nazi Germany lies in its timing. But in principle, the Soviet Union has always stood for peaceful, businesslike relations with all countries. At the Eighteenth Congress of the Russian Communist Party last March, Joseph Stalin stressed what all friends and observers of the Soviet Union know: that the Russian people "stand for peace and the strengthening of business relations with all countries."

Referring to the proposed non-aggression pact to be subscribed the following Wednesday, August 23, *New Masses* said:

It should be understood that a non-aggression pact has nothing in common with a treaty of mutual assistance such as the Soviet Union contracted with France and Czechoslovakia in 1935. If a pact such as the Soviet Union has with the Baltic states is signed, Germany and Russia will agree merely not to attack each other. Nor is there anything in the principle of non-aggression treaties which would prevent other nations from uniting with the Soviet Union in the case of an attack by Hitler upon their borders or territories. In short, nothing in the negotiations prevents England and France from signing a peace front with the Soviet Union and thus assuring Polish independence against Hitler.

Yet, according to Clause IV of the Soviet-German non-aggression pact cabled from Moscow to the *Daily Worker,* August 24:

Neither of the contracting parties will participate in any grouping of powers which is either directly or indirectly aimed against the other contracting party.

And the next day the *Daily Worker* went so far in straining its readers' credulity as to say in a leading editorial:

Most significantly, the majority of comments from Poland, the nation most threatened by aggression, continues to be to the effect that the Soviet Union's action hinders aggression. Indeed, it is admitted that it further weakens the aggressor and goes a long way toward removing the danger of another Munich.

The pre-pact attitude of the *Nation* was in the same school as the *New Masses':* The *Nation* distrusted and execrated Chamberlain, as one willing to deal with Germany; it wanted an anti-appeasement "peace front" welded around union of England, France and Russia. For instance, their star reporter, Louis Fischer, wrote July 22:

In all these ugly years of unnecessary surrender to the rapacious fascists, the USSR has been the most effective—perhaps the only effective—anti-fascist great power.

The expression of the *Nation's* disillusionment is a gauge of the remarkably false impression of Russia held before the new pacts. On August 26 an editorial states:

Red Star and Swastika, once mutually exclusive symbols, have come together, and the diplomatic map of Europe has been redrawn overnight. . . . We have no doubt that the Soviet Government will attempt to justify itself by pointing to the untrustworthy nature of the capitalist democracies. . . . This now appears like an attempt at alibi manufacture. . . .

Soviet Russia had assumed leadership of the anti-fascist front the world over . . . (This quotation is contained in *Views and Reviews,* on page 455.)

The *New Republic* spent much of its effort in the attempt to bring together all "liberal and progressive" groups into a united front with the Communists to exert pressure on the "great democracies" to make them line up with the great defender of democracy, the USSR. At the very last moment—indeed, the issue was dated post-Nazi-Soviet understanding—the *New Republic* could say in its editorial comment:

The events of the past week underline more clearly than before the folly of Chamberlain's delay in coming to terms with Soviet Russia.

Edmund Stevens expresses well the assumptions of the *New Republic* line in an article in the August 2 issue:

When Western observers, accustomed to the empiricism of democratic politics and impressed by superficial resemblances, predict a Russo-German rapprochement, they overlook the deep-rooted social antagonism and the important role of doctrinaire ideology in shaping and controlling the mass mind in Eastern Europe. Hitler could no more make friends with Soviet Russia than he could with the Jews.

The *New Republic* was very hard on "liberal" groups who distrusted the freedom and democracy of the Soviet Union and linked it with the fascist powers. On May 31, attacking the Committee for Cultural Freedom, it editorialized:

In lumping together the Fascist powers with the USSR, the committee shows, we feel, a regrettable lack of historical perspective.

After the event, the *New Republic* was ready to teach many lessons:

The announcement of the German-Russian non-aggression pact and trade treaty can mean nothing except that the Soviet Union has turned a cold shoulder to Britain and France at the critical moment, and has abandoned Poland to Hitler, just as at Munich Russia was thrust into the outer darkness by Chamberlain and Daladier, and Czecho-Slovakia was sacrificed. . . .

The moral prestige of the Soviet government will be injured both at home and abroad just as Chamberlain's action dealt a heavy moral blow at the prestige of the British government. For years the Communist movement has been preaching collective security; though Chamberlain gave this doctrine a mortal wound, he and his faction had never been among its chief supporters and he has lately tried to resuscitate it in limited form. But, now it lies slain at the hands of its chief supporter. The line of the Soviet press and theatre and of the Communist International for years has been consistently and powerfully anti-Nazi; to this line the Comintern has adjusted all its policy—its co-operation in united and popular fronts, its renewed interest in democracy as a bulwark against fascism; its support of Spain; its defense of the independence of small nations and subject peoples. . . .

Finally, there is a lesson for the United States. It is that we should continue to be distrustful of idealistic slogans, interested propaganda and simple-minded divisions among "good" and "bad" nations. European affairs are still full of insincerity, devious methods, secrets and surprises, and we should not be taken aback at any treachery or weakness.

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The Screen

Golden Lads and Lassies

THOSE who saw Clifford Odets's stage hit will find the movie made from "Golden Boy" somewhat pale by comparison. Nevertheless, "Golden Boy" is still an exceptionally interesting and moving film. Rouben Mamoulian's forceful direction has made the Bonaparte family episodes and the scenes in the Madison Square Garden and in Joe's dressing room come vigorously to life. He has guided William Holden in his first picture and allowed the boy's natural charm and spontaneity to win you to the touching story. You feel for Joe who is "mixed up inside," torn between devotion to music and his new love for power, fame and money. You feel even more strongly for Joe's father (expertly portrayed by Lee J. Cobb), who wants his son to be a violinist but tells him to do what his heart says. Barbara Stanwyck as the dame from Newark, Adolphe Menjou as Joe's manager, Joseph Calleia as the chiseling racketeer who buys a piece of Joe, and Sam Levene as Joe's brother-in-law are on hand to cheer on or deter the young prizefighter's rapid rise and fall.

Producer Joe Pasternak, who makes the Deanna Durbin pictures, has a "discovery" of whom he might well be proud. She is Gloria Jean, an eleven-year-old. But he didn't do well by his golden girl in her first picture. "The Underpup" has a ridiculously exaggerated story about some overly snobbish rich girls who entertain Pip-Emma, a good hearted but tough tenement kid, at their summer camp. Children will enjoy the slapstick humor of the caretaker's Katzenjammer kids and Pip-Emma's victories over the privileged girls, but adults will resent the stacked cards and immature, obvious solution.

The French, who call a spade a spade, take their films about young folk seriously. In "Song of the Streets" no millionaire comes to the aid of these Parisian toughies (who could teach our Dead End Kids a thing about acting and about being tough). Jacques and his gang, left to their own shady devices, somberly learn the hard way that crime does not pay. Directed by Victor Trivas, this picture (with English sub-titles) tells with romantic realism heightened by Rudolph Mate's beautiful photography and Hanns Eisler's symphonic score, the pathetic tale of a jobless group of youngsters who swing down their tawdry, tarnished path until a jolt with the law makes them appreciate their freedom. No attempt is made to answer, "Who is to blame?"

A labor-capital film done with some integrity would be welcome. "Our Leading Citizen" is decidedly not this film. Dilly-dallying back and forth, confusing the strike issue with Americanism, politics, Legionnaires, a crooked capitalist, a villainous strikebreaker, a musical-comedy Red who blows up the capitalist's plant and a couple of lovers, "Our Leading Citizen" fails to make sense or entertainment. Homespun, Will Rogerish philosophy spouted by Bob Burns as he talks to a bust of Lincoln and advocates the middle road does not clear up the muddle.

PHILIP T. HARTUNG.

Ethiopia: Then and Now

By ELIZABETH S. KITE

"IF the country is what you say it is, why didn't we occupy it before?" was the not unexpected response of an English audience to an up-to-date account of Italian East-Africa. The answer was "Without aviation and wireless there could have been no occupation."[1] As for rapidity of conquest two factors operated: first, sanctions, which roused and consolidated Italian energy; second, the shaky foundation on which rested the throne of Hailé Selassie. The story, briefly stated, is as follows:

Menelik II named as successor Lidj Yassu, son of his eldest daughter and her Mohammedan husband, who became Negus in 1913. In the meantime Ras Makonnen of Harar, cousin of Menelik, was preparing his son, Prince Tafari, for the place. Taking advantage of the indolence of the Negus and his Mohammedan leanings, an insurrection was organized. In 1916 he was deposed and made prisoner. Zaudita, youngest daughter of Menelik, became Empress and Prince Tafari Regent. With tact, understanding and skill the latter raised himself to a position where in 1930 he had himself crowned at Addis Ababa as Negus-Negasti, taking the name of Hailé Selassie I. Unluckily for him he defied tradition in omitting the holy oils from the Abuna of Axoum who alone had power to confer the title.[2]

The story of conditions at the moment of penetration has often been told but never with the charm of a certain French woman who followed the Northern army through Tigré, Amhara, Gojjam to Addis-Ababa. The mysterious and historic soul of the country is never lost sight of even in face of the misery, squalor and filth of the native population.[3] The beauty of the flowers, the gorgeous coloring of birds and butterflies, come out strongly against a background of terrifying cliffs and precipices with the drab, windowless, vermin-infested *touculs* crowded at their base.

Mme. Bonneuil had the good fortune to join on foot a pilgrimage led by a Coptic Priest, who chanted together rhythmically as they hurried on. They were going to Axoum which is the Lourdes as well as the Rheims of Abyssinia. The Holy City was one mass of afflicted humanity; she noted a little boy crawling, with a mangy dog licking his bleeding sores. All were going to dip themselves in the sacred pool hoping for a cure.

"A white woman! Art thou then a slave? But why didst thou not come in a machine that walks on its stomach, or in one with wings and a tail that glides over the trees through the clouds?" asked a small black boy, who had picked up a little Italian.

And Axoum! Who were those mighty Kings that set up these obelisks, one, the tallest and heaviest known to exist? And Our Lady of Mount Sion, boasting the possession of the Arc of the Covenant and the Tables of the Law, those precious treasures sent to the Queen of Sheba

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[1] The New Abyssinia, by Major E. W. Polson Newman. London.

[2] Abyssinia on the Eve, by Ladislaus Farago. New York.

[3] *Bivouac aux Etoiles,* by Mme. Bonneuil. Paris: *Librarie Plon.*

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by Solomon when her son, Menelik I, visited his father in Jerusalem. And what of the six hundred and sixty-six saints buried behind the monastery, carved out of the rock of the mountain that has housed thousands of Religious? Today Axoum has a hundred churches and Ethiopia a hundred thousand priests; one out of every ten of its Christian male inhabitants.

From this picture we turn to Mohammedan Somaliland and the Ogaden desert. The story is told by another French journalist, but one who writes objectively.[4] Pure love of adventure made *"Mlle. Paulette"* choose the Southern army, facing torrid heat and trackless, waterless sands. She conducted herself so well that the *Croix de Guerre Italienne* with palm was given her. Greeted by Grazziani at his Residence in Mogadisco, he said laughingly: "One woman and twenty thousand men! Are you not afraid?"

"Your Excellency," she retorted, "Twenty thousand men are nothing; it is one man who is sometimes too much."

The campaign against Negelli, headquarters of Ras Desta, son-in-law of the Negus, began at Dolo on the border of Ogaden. Here the natives, men and women, were in striking contrast to the people of the north; tall, slender, with muscles firm and fine bearing. Leprosy, however, was present the same as in the north. The heat and the dust were stifling. Water? Mostly not a drop could be spared for washing even the face. A liter a day was the ration and that too might be called on, each giving a few drops, for a wounded soldier picked up by the way or a band of exhausted askari. "For the love of God, have pity!" Ten liters? A veritable fortune! But they were contributed and the "brave black soldiers" had their tchai (tea).

As for lions, jackals, hyenas, no one paid attention for a fire at night kept them away. But elephants were different! What was an army camp to these *proboscidiens?* Tents and humans would have simply found themselves slung a hundred meters away in the brush.

Once a fluttering blue ribbon seemed to fall on the camion step; "What angel," she thought, "lost the ornament from her golden locks?" She stooped to examine. It lifted itself, straightened out and a long slender serpent glided away.

After the flight of Ras Desta there remained the long dreary march northward along the Shibelli with the troops of Ras Nasibu offering strenuous resistence, until the final triumphant entry into Harrar and the subsequent junction of the armies of north and south at Diré-Daoua the 9th May, 1936.

Harrar! Fantastic tales of the imprisonment of Lidj Yassu are as numerous as improbable. Did he live, feasted to the point of insensibility, under the care of monks, in a palace built for him close to an almost inaccessible monastery beyond Harrar? Or was he kept, loaded with golden chains, in a cage of wood and iron perched on a lonely peak? The truth will probably never be known. Certain it is that one of the last acts of Hailé Selassie before he fled from Harrar was to eliminate all trace of the existence of Lidj Yassu, past as well as present, though his son, whom he had never seen, still lives, protected in French Somaliland.

No more reliable report regarding post-war conditions could be found than that of Major Newman, spoken of above. He spent three months in 1937 visiting by plane and motor every part of the country, studying conditions. He was specially interested in the scientific work under way for the elimination of animal diseases and insect pests, besides segregation of leprosy and providing adequate hospital accommodations and decent prisons, all which and much more must be in working order before colonization can commence.

Former Crown lands and those held by chiefs who emigrated or were defeated, belong now to the government, but Church lands and those privately owned or belonging to chiefs who submitted, are left untouched in their hands. These may not tax or receive tribute from their former retainers. Slavery, abolished by edict during the late reign, could not actually disappear until there was something to put in its place. The weekly pay-day has accomplished the miracle. One sees Italian laborers, middle class Amahras and former slaves working side by side, draining marshes, building roads and bridges, planting crops and all receiving the same wage. All religions are free. In the larger towns Catholic churches are to be found while in outlying districts where work is going on, Mass is said in the open or under a tent, and the workmen always attend.

But of all Ethiopia the "rich southwest" interested the English Major most. Practically virgin soil, almost denuded of population and of trees because of the age-old practice of slave-raiding, this vast plateau with a climate like that of Tuscany is admirably fitted for grazing and for every kind of agriculture. The forests that remain abound in precious woods such as ebony, mahogany, rosewood, while in places, as along the canyon of the Blue Nile, the scenery is impressive in the extreme. A population of a million more or less can easily find room and when developed, the markets of Kenya, the Soudan, can be reached in the south, while already at Gambella on the Baro, a branch of the White Nile, steamers from Kartoum in the rainy season, bring merchandise from Egypt. This is only barely to touch on the possible future of Abyssinia.

But there is one fear, and one alone, that haunts the newcomers to Italian East-Africa; the fear of a European war. From present prospects, this and this alone can retard or prevent success to the whole gigantic undertaking.

[4] *Echec au Lion,* by Paule-Herfort. Paris: *Edition Baudinière.*

Books of the Week

New England Conscience

Man's Estate, by Alfred Bingham. New York: W. W. Norton and Company. $3.00.

IN MANY ways this is, really, an extraordinary book. It is an intelligent and searching book. It is an honest book—in which a young man puts down, after long trial, what, about the economic world, he has come to believe. The main problem he set for himself was to discover the

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relation between economic organization and freedom. The book is a very personal thing and is, therefore, subtitled Adventures in Economic Discovery.

It is the personal quality of the work that gives to it the special meaning I found in it. For it is evident, a society is unhealthy that has many Marie Antoinettes or Brenda Fraziers. But it is filled with vigor when a young man, brought up "not to associate with muckers," begins to wonder what justifies his existence.

"The world," he writes, "in which I grew up was 'an economy of abundance.' I cannot remember ever doing without anything I wanted because it cost more than my family was able to spend. Inherited wealth was the foundation of the spacious home in which I spent my childhood, and I early came to believe that having to 'work for a living' was a comparatively rare misfortune in an otherwise ample and affluent world."

From this to editing *Commonsense* and writing this book is a long mental leap. Having concluded that something was wrong with this state of things, Mr. Bingham set out to discover what it was. This adventure took various forms of "working for a living," traveling in Europe, and reading very deeply. (To college he attaches about as much importance as does Stevenson.) Of this mental adventure is the book an account.

Having surveyed the economic system he concluded that economic planning, which avoided Communism and Fascism and liquidated nobody, was necessary. He wished, you see, to preserve freedom in intelligent economic organization. His suggestions are not, necessarily, important. Besides myself, for example, he is the only one I know who thinks NRA was a good idea. There is a certain naivete in his conclusion that if everyone had the income of those who now frequent the New York parkways and Jones Beach, "new parkways and new Jones Beaches will spring like mushrooms. Multiply them by the hundreds all over the country, by lake, mountain and seashore, and what nobler estate could any man desire?" I must say I can think of things nearer to my heart's desire.

What, however, particularly interests me about the book is its reassertion of the New England conscience. Bingham reacts to the economic system as Thornton Wilder's writer reacted to Italian mores in "The Cabala." Insofar as there is connection between our economic chaos and morality, the economic chaos is the result of prolonged ethical sleep. The classical economist abandoned completely the ethical implications of the system he alleged to report, and his rationalizations of *laissez-faire* could better have been labelled *je m'en fiche*. I suggest that—among other reasons the New Englander probably freed himself from Calvinistic ethics because, as Theodore Parker long ago pointed out, he could more easily set up in the place "the institution of money—master of all the rest." At any rate, the revived New Englander in Mr. Bingham interests me greatly.

I recommend this book, also, because it contains the most devastating critical analysis of Marxian economics that I have seen since Bertrand Russell's Proposed Roads to Freedom. Following Keynes, perhaps, Mr. Bingham regards Marx as "the founder of the most powerful religion of modern times." Economically regarded, however, he finds that "the toll of human suffering and brutalization which Marxism has exacted of the Soviet Union is immeasurable." He affirms a profound truth, too, when he notes that Marxism has had a sterilizing influence on thousands of young people. Mr. Bingham is not here reporting his emotions. He has read widely in Marxist literature and in that most dismal of books, Das Capital.

I think, therefore, the following judgment worthy of great respect: "They (Marxists) have made virtually no progress in understanding 'Capitalism' or its 'laws of motion.' And because he (Marx) discouraged the study of the economics of 'Socialism' as 'utopian,' they have contributed little to an understanding of the economic requirements of our present era. Their intellectual failures have extended into other fields than economics. No Marxist has, so far as I know, contributed anything substantial to the natural or social sciences. I say this in no petty, cavilling spirit. If the Marxists did not make such great pretensions it would not be necessary to go so far afield. But, claiming a uniquely valid approach to knowledge, the Marxists lay themselves open to the counter-charge that they have contributed pitifully little to an understanding of the modern world." FRANCIS DOWNING.

HISTORY

American Diplomacy and the Boer War, by John H. Ferguson. Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press. $2.50.

THIS thoroughly documented study represents an attempt to assemble and organize the available evidence into a complete and accurate survey of the extent and manner in which the American government was involved in the Boer War. A greater strain was put upon our government than has been commonly realized. European powers wanted the United States to assist the Boers. Boers and their sympathizers sought to force the American government to modify its well-established neutral policy of allowing nations at war to buy freely any supplies whatsoever in American markets because that policy was operating in favor of England; and they exerted superhuman efforts to cause the United States to exert its moral and political power to prevent the war, to modify the manner in which it was conducted, to hasten its ending, and to moderate the terms of peace. Professor Ferguson is of the opinion that, in spite of the fact that public opinion in the United States came to be overwhelmingly in favor of the Boers, the American government acted throughout the war as if in friendly alliance with England, and by doing so did much to prevent intervention by European powers, thus assuring the annihilation of the Boer republics. JOHN J. O'CONNOR.

FICTION

The Open Sky, by L. A. G. Strong. New York: The Macmillan Company. $2.50.

THIS novel might have been called "The Portrait of the Artist as a Middle-Aged Man." It is the story of David Heron, a Londoner, who has come in middle life to almost complete spiritual, mental and physical bankruptcy. His doctor brings him to a remote island off the Irish coast, hoping that a complete change of life and association with simple folk will effect the cure that psychiatry cannot accomplish. He leaves him alone there, in the cottage where once dwelt the greater painter Seager, who gave the island its only glimpse of fame.

The newcomer is immediately identified by the islanders with Seager, who troubled their quiet life to its depths. David is involved in a complexus of difficulties: his housekeeper is Seager's young illegitimate daughter, and her family fear a repetition of her mother's story; his outlandish ways outrage the islanders; his offer of his services as a doctor is distrusted and all evils are laid at his door;

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his kindness to the girl Sheila brings him into rivalry with her suitor Donough, a giant fisherman. The plot is essentially concerned with David's wavering between his love for his wife in London and his affection for Sheila, who symbolizes all the cleanness, strength and dignity of island life to him, as his wife represents the torturing complications of his existence in London.

The book is ably done. Without flooding the reader with Freud, Strong conveys the thought of a sick man with absolute reality: the doubts, the uncertainties, the hysterical rages, the horrible sense of aloneness. He brings the island and its manners alive, and makes great play with the conflict of over-civilization and peasant simplicity. He even clothes his *deus ex machina,* a boorish priest named Morrissey, with such winning earthiness that the working out of the plot, though forced, is convincing. There is a sureness about the execution of the book that never permits the reader's interest to falter. Though the protagonist is a Protestant of sorts, the novel is Catholic in the best sense, and deserves a wide Catholic audience.

MASON WADE.

BIOGRAPHY

Soaring Wings: A Biography of Amelia Earhart, by George Palmer Putnam. New York: Harcourt, Brace and Company. $2.50.

SOARING WINGS unfolds the story of a modern woman who stormed one of the newest of the new industries of the twentieth century, aviation. Amelia Earhart's sister, Muriel, has given freely of her memories to the author. The building of a roller-coaster, fishing parties, and other of the things that Amelia and her sister and their young friends did, show the freedom from convention which the Earhart parents granted their children and which gave an impetus that propelled the vigorous and daring Amelia along paths which the average woman seldom treads. All this material has been well utilized by her manager-husband, Mr. Putnam, in portraying the growth of Amelia's character until she reached the dizzy heights of the United States' Number One aviatrix.

The book skims lightly over her flying hours, giving short résumés of her first flight, the Friendship's crossing of the Atlantic, her Atlantic solo, and others, such as Honolulu-California, Mexico City-New York, and her last, from Honolulu westward. These actual flights are more thoroughly and enjoyably given in her own books, "The Fun of It" and "Last Flight."

When not flying, Amelia Earhart directed her vitality into many channels. She was active in social service. Then for a while she held a professorship at Purdue, in the field covering the advancement of women in business. She lectured throughout the country on aviation, and worked generally at that main interest of her life. These avocations, and companionship with an intimate circle of friends, filled her days with things to do, as she would say, "for the fun of it."

The guiding principles most strongly emphasized by her husband were those favoring women in business. Mr. Putnam says, "She rather hoped the day would come when the volume of women would so glut employment outlets that the whole world would be forced to think through to a better economic system."

Other elements of interest in the book are her comments about friends, celebrities and dignitaries who at various times passed through her life. Particularly interesting are the reasons Mr. Putnam gives for her way of dealing with our modern age, and for her desire to fly and work at aeronautics. The biography shows also the bewildering maze that life becomes once one has become famous, and the comings and goings of the aviatrix riding the wings of fame which she found to be so fickle.

PHILIP H. WILLIAMS.

Ernest Psichari: A Study in Religious Conversion, by Wallace Fowlie. New York: Longmans, Green and Company. $1.80.

CONTEMPORARY France is slowly but surely returning to its Catholic Christian heritage. The Church cradled French civilization, whose continued greatness and glorious civilizing mission is contingent upon fidelity to the teaching of the Church. These truths so evident to the large majority of present-day French intellectuals and statesmen were not so clear to the moulders of public opinion of the nineteenth century.

One of the men who contributed to affect such a change of mind in contemporary France was Ernest Psichari, the grandson of Ernest Renan. Born September, 1883, in a family whose children were brought up completely outside the Church, he died on a battlefield in Belgium during the first month of the World War, with his rosary of black beads around his wrist and on his breast the Greek cross of his baptism. How account for the change? Bourget's "Le Disciple" was the opening shot upon the entrenched citadel of scientific positivism and naturalism of the times. Renan himself, though an apostate, pleaded as does a fallen-away American Catholic today, for a more sympathetic attitude towards religion. And Bergson was daily showing the inadequacy of the ruling determinism and scientism and materialism.

On August 25, 1906, Psichari left for Africa. He had joined the army after a period of storm and stress, of waverings, of immorality and mental anguish. While exploring the country between the Soudan and the basin of the Congo for France, he found time to write a travel journal and to read Péguy's *"Cahiers"* and correspond with Maritain in France. The chief influence upon him was Maritain, whose books he constantly read and who asked him to wear a medal of the Virgin and recite daily the Ave Marie. When he returned to France in 1912, Psichari revealed to his friend Maritain his desire to be quickly received into the Church. Father Clérissac instructed him in the Faith and in February, 1913, he received the Sacrament. He was then twenty-nine years old. Up to the day of his death he was a daily communicant and when war was declared he was one of the first to go to the front where he fell.

Wallace Fowlie is to be complimented upon this little book, a study rather than a full biography, wherein he not only movingly tells us the story of Ernest Pschari, but analyzes his works. But perhaps the most encouraging thing about this book is that an American here enters ably into the general intellectual movement of the Church.

JOSEPH CALDERON.

PHILOSOPHY

How Firm a Foundation, by Willis Dwight Nutting. New York: Sheed and Ward. $1.75.

EVERY well-educated Catholic knows that his religion is not a bar to intellectual curiosity or sincerity, though this is a fact often puzzling to the non-Catholic

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observer. The present work is an attempt by a Catholic raised in a non-Catholic intellectual atmosphere to formulate clearly for himself the reasons why a Catholic can hold a world-view contrary to that of most of his contemporaries and still retain his intellectual honesty.

As a record of the author's personal solution of the problem this is an interesting work. He emphasizes the influence of the Cartesian method on the development of the modern spirit of inquiry and rightly points out the weakness of that method as a universal rule of inquiry. He also analyzes the contemporary notion that the method of the natural sciences is the only valid approach to knowledge in any field, and reveals the error implicit in that attitude. He concludes with an investigation into the ground for the modern denial of the supernatural and a criticism of the methods of the Higher Critics in the interpretation of the Scriptures.

A serious misinterpretation of the method of Descartes is apparent from the beginning of the book. The author seemingly has given Thomistic meaning to the language of Descartes, and the doctrine he is criticizing as that of Descartes does not truly represent the thought of Descartes. As a specific example, the matter of the judgment for Descartes is not the proposition, as it is for St. Thomas, but ideas intuitively perceived.

The terms of this deep problem are over-simplified by the author, but he has pointed out many of the widely-held errors responsible for much of the present-day bias against the Church. The book is clearly written and provides a thought-provoking approach to a perennially interesting question. DANIEL J. SULLIVAN.

CRITICISM

Old Gods Falling, by Malcolm Elwin. New York: The Macmillan Company. $3.50.

THE OLD GODS of Mr. Elwin's title are the fetishes of Victorian respectability. This book is an attempt at a critical summary of the course of English literature from the 1887 Jubilee of Queen Victoria up to the present day. It is a good book, but it might have been very much better. Mr. Elwin has chosen to be facetious and "interesting" in the vulgar sense of that word which he himself decries; he has overburdened his book with gossip, sarcasm and personalities. This is unfortunate, as a methodical, critical examination of the period is needed.

The now rather threadbare view of Victorianism as comprehensive of all evil dominates this book. The author shows us the downfall of Victorian "mores," the lighting of the brief candle of the nineties, the drive of the generation of Arnold Bennett and John Galsworthy against social shams, and he leaves us with a warning lest the old gods be permitted to return. It is all extremely facile and persuasive, but this effect is attained by the suppression of a good deal of evidence.

To me, the best part of the book was the discussion of such neglected and minor figures as Rider Haggard, Marie Corelli, Grant Allen, the best-sellers of their day, also the examination of the popular critics, Gosse, Saintsbury and Lang. Mr. Elwin obviously admires John Galsworthy's work and does him justice. He pays tribute, as well, to the memory of W. E. Henley, as critic. And his chapter on George Moore is worth reading as the latest nail in the literary coffin of the greatest humbug of our times. It was pleasant to find Mr. Elwin appreciative of the critical work of Osbert Burdett, a man unjustly neglected. J. G. E. HOPKINS.

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The Inner Forum

"THE Role of the University in National Catholic Action" is the theme of the 18th annual congress of Pax Romana being held August 27 to September 9. The first week is a "Study Week" at the Catholic University in Washington; the congress proper takes place at Fordham University in New York the second week. About 1,000 delegates are participating, over 300 from foreign countries — chiefly Canada, Europe and Latin America. Impressive liturgical ceremonies emphasizing the universality of the Church are an important feature.

In the summer of 1921 Pax Romana was organized at Fribourg, Switzerland, primarily by students and professors from countries such as Holland, Spain and Switzerland, which had been neutral in the world war. Bishop Muench of Fargo, N. D., and Father Regan, M.S., of the LaSalette Fathers of Hartford, Conn., who were students at the time, were on the organizing committee. One of the federation's immediate aims was to raise funds for their fellow students in Austria and Germany who were in dire need. This tradition continues: Pax Romana has been supplying textbooks to Spanish university students.

The more general aim of Pax Romana is to sponsor and facilitate the exchange of ideas and experiences among national student organizations in all spheres of Catholic university life. This means a broadening and deepening of the student's intellectual and spiritual horizon. It inevitably builds up international good will.

The General Secretariate at Fribourg publishes *Folia Periodica* in three languages. It also maintains contact with the various national organizations, which differ widely in character despite the common aims and problems in Catholic student life. In the United States, for instance, the six federations affiliated include the Catholic Students Peace Federation, the National Federation of Catholic College Students, the Ukrainian Catholic League of America, Theta Kappi Phi and the National Federation of Catholic Alumni.

CONTRIBUTORS

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